

ERC Info Day on Widening Participation

2 July 2024

Answers to pending questions in Slido

| Question | Answer |
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| In the current “information for applicants” there is no mention about 10-year track record for AdG. Is not required to limit track record to 10 years anymore? | This is no longer required. Among the problems with such a strict 10-year cut-off is the fact that it disfavoured applicants who took career breaks or returned to research from leadership positions in academic management, politics or industry. Now only the word “recent” is mentioned and it is up to the applicant to decide what recent means to them. |
| My specifications lay in panel x yet the project topic is about panel y. Should I choose panel x or y? | You may choose the panel with descriptors that better fit your research (https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-03/ERC_panel_structure_2024_calls.pdf .) You can also compare your research topic against the expertise of past panel members (https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/panel-members?CMCTQQgti7) and see in which panel they served. |
| Is it possible to apply for an ERC advanced grant for a project where I am the only researcher, and that is planned to result in a monograph? | It is possible, but usually grants are all about building a team around an ambitious idea, hence why the proposed budgets are to hire multiple people. The result can be a monograph. |
| Does the ERC fund fundamental research in Humanities and which panel is best suited for that? | Here is the list of all ERC Panels: https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-03/ERC_panel_structure_2024_calls.pdf You can search within the Social Sciences and Humanities list. |
| Can in Starting or Consolidator or Advanced grant we have 2 beneficiaries? | ERC grants are usually mono-beneficiary but if it brings added value to the project, additional team members may also be hosted by additional legal entities. |
| Any additional advice for SyG? | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Ensure that there is an obvious scientific interest for all PIs – it should not be one PI with the question and the others providing the tools. All PIs should be advancing their research through the grant.2) Synergy is complex to define so it's the most difficult part to prove in a proposal, but it helps usually if some of the PIs have shown some collaboration before. |
| How much info about the risk should be included in Part B1? Does it have to be specific | You can put a paragraph on risk and risk management at the bottom of each objective or you can have a whole separate section on risk. |

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| to the implementation of the ROs and provide a mitigation plan? | There is no recommended length – it is up to you to judge how much information is needed at this stage. |
| I got my PhD on 5 January 2023 and will reach the two-year mark on 5 January 2025. Can I apply for the ERC Starting Grant or wait until next year? | The ERC Work Programme for 2025 was not published at the time of the webinar, but based on rules from the 2024 programme, the window would be up to 31 December 2022. You should wait for the 2026 call. The ERC work programme was adopted on 9 July 2025 and is available for download at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2025/wp_horizon-erc-2025_en.pdf |
| Is there a single document with all the guidelines for CoG that is available now or will it be available once the 2025 call is open? | Usually, the information for applicants includes information for both StG/CoG so it will be available in July. The templates are the same for StG and CoG (apart from the title at the top). The document for the 2025 calls is now available for download at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2025/wp_horizon-erc-2025_en.pdf |
| What is the maximum time extension due to natural disasters and illness? Has Covid-19 been considered a natural disaster? | There is no longer a maximum extension (a few years ago it used to be 4 years). COVID-19 is not considered as a natural disaster since most people have been affected in one way or another. COVID-19 can be considered a long-term illness (>90 days) if properly documented. |
| Where will it be published the ranking? | The result of each evaluation is announced on the ERC website. Candidates will receive an individual notification with their result. |
| So only some panel members read the whole proposal but the whole panel then gets the reviews before the meeting, right? | All panel members have access to all proposals (except to those in which they are in conflict of interest). At a minimum 3 (usually, 4-5) of them provide a written review. The rest of the panel members familiarise themselves with the proposals/reviews and participate in the panel discussion. Decisions are taken in plenary. |
| Where can I find info on what sort of activities can be funded with the CoG? | You can have a look at the ERC Dashboard (link also provided in the Useful Links document) or in CORDIS . |
| About the evaluation process: For Step 2, are there two additional evaluation criteria that are taken into account also by the external evaluators? | The evaluation criterion is the same (scientific excellence), the evaluation template is slightly different. It includes questions on the proposed methodology, research programme, requested resources, etc. These questions are the same also for remote (external) reviewers. |
| Please, explain grades A and A, the difference between them, and grades A not supported and B - in both you can apply next year, right? | At Step 1: all proposals scored A can resubmit next year (even if not invited for interview). Pls |

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| | for proposals scored B must wait for 1 year. PIs for proposals scored C must wait for 2 years. At Step 2: No resubmission restrictions, all can apply next year (both A's unfunded and B's). |
| Is there a table clarifying what parts of the proposal—A, B1, B2, etc. —are read by specialists within specific panels and generalists? | At Step 1, all reviewers act as generalists and only read part B1. Both generalists and remote experts (specialists) are reading the same material in the step 2 remote phase: they are reading Part B1, Part B2 and Budget. Only the ERCEA reads Part A. |
| Does my proposal must include a method or proxy development? | No. |
| Regarding ERC Synergy, is it problematic to have PIs from the same institution? | No – a number of Synergy projects have been funded where the PIs are in the same Host Institution. |
| May Synergy grants include a PI from an HI that is in the USA? If yes, would that reduce the chances of the proposal? | One Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant group (except the Corresponding PI), may be hosted and engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries. The location of the PI does not increase or reduce the chances of success. |
| Do I have more chance to get my CoG if I explain in my proposal that during my CoG I will submit a PoC? | No. |
| How can someone become part of an evaluating panel? Do you need to apply somewhere? | The ERC panel members are all personally nominated by the Scientific Council. For other Horizon Europe calls you can register to become an expert here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert |
| Is a 23-month extension in the eligibility period for a Starting Grant way too much to request? | There is no limit in the extension of the eligibility window (except for clinical training, maximum 4 years). |
| How do we provide means of verification for PhD defense date? I don't think I have something like that. | This depends on the country and even Institution/University. In some countries, the PhD certificate includes this date. Any official certificate provided by the PhD awarding institution is valid. |
| Do I need to clarify the average rate of the team members for 1,00 FTE? | Usually in the resources section, the overall amount per staff category is mentioned, as well as the number of staff with the corresponding FTE or person-month. There is no need to define the value of each FTE. |
| Does the CV section act as an excellence or a "eligibility" criterion? From the discussion its role in the overall evaluation process is not clear. | It is solely an excellence criterion. Eligibility criteria are the Host Institution letter and the PhD defence date in the case of StG and CoG. |
| If I receive B in Step 2, it's better to resubmit next year or wait 2 years for panel with a similar composition of experts who have already seen my proposal? | Panels are renewed by the Scientific Council every year; thus you will never be evaluated by exactly the same panel. Evaluating panels are designed to cover all expertise compiled in the panel descriptors. Panel composition should |

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| | not be a criterion to decide when to (re-)submit your proposal. |
| Evaluators consider that the requested large equipment is not properly justified. Could you provide clear guidelines of what should the justification contain? | Clearly justify why that equipment is necessary and essential to carry out the proposed research. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis. |
| How is the interview panel composed? | The whole evaluation panel (14-16 panel members) participate in the interview, except members in conflict of interest. |
| Large clinical trials are usually a “continuation” within a research field. Are clinical trials less attractive for ERC grants? | The ERC funds ground-breaking and ambitious research. While this can include clinical trials, it is in practice usually limited to early-stage exploratory clinical trials with novel tools or technologies, or to the testing of new statistical methods or clinical trial designs. Larger scale (e.g., phase 2 or 3) clinical trials are usually not considered frontier research and their cost would also usually lie outside the remit of an ERC project. An example of a project including a phase 1 study is ViroPedTher ‘Oncolytic viruses for the treatment of pediatric brain tumors: An integrated clinical and lab approach’. More information can be found at this link: Oncolytic viruses for the treatment of pediatric brain tumors: An integrated clinical and lab approach ViroPedTher Project Fact sheet H2020 CORDIS European Commission (europa.eu) Another example is MGUS screening RCT ‘Screening for monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance: A population-based randomized clinical trial’. More information can be found at this link: Screening for monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance: A population-based randomized clinical trial MGUS screening RCT Project Fact sheet H2020 CORDIS European Commission (europa.eu) |
| If it is the last year for a researcher to apply for a Starting grant & he gets a penalty for 2 years, does that apply if he applies for Consolidator grant next year? | Yes, it also applies. The PI cannot submit for 2 years to any ERC individual grant scheme. |
| When will we have ERC StG 2024 results? If not successful, they may apply for ERC StG 2025 that will be launched soon. | End of August 2024 is the tentative time. You can resubmit for 2025 call if you do not have any other resubmission restrictions. |
| Novelty & incremental...aiming a research in an area/country inaccessible, but refining aims & methodology with a different approach is that competitive? | If the country is inaccessible, then this will have to be dealt with in the ethics/security screening. If you develop a special methodology and aim to answer questions specific to a country/problem not studied before, therefore it could be novel and innovative. |

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| <p>I am sorry, I know you have already answered about the deliverables, but it was not clear to me, do we need to specify them in B1?</p> | <p>ERC Grants do not require specific deliverables. Part B1 should clearly state what you want to reach (overall goal, objectives) and the approach to reach it.</p> |
| <p>I benefit from an Access ERC grant offered by my country. I have to keep my university as the host when I apply for an ERC. Can I still change it during the ERC?</p> | <p>Your ERC grant is fully portable. You should clarify the specific constraints linked to the Access grant with your host institution.</p> |
| <p>What is the earliest date an ERC Advanced Grant can start if it is awarded in this year call?</p> | <p>The earliest date to start the project is the first day of the month following the signature of the grant agreement by both parties (HI and the Agency).</p> |
| <p>Is there any guidance for the scale of budget that would be needed for an ethics advisor?</p> | <p>Guidance on the roles and functions of Ethics Advisor and Ethics Advisory Boards in EC-funded projects can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/roles-and-functions-of-ethics-advisory-ethics-advisory-boards-in-ec-funded-projects_en.pdf. Please note that a specific scale of budget is not defined. The remuneration should be agreed between the PI/HI and the Ethics Advisor based on factors such as the number of meetings, periodicity of the reports, complexity of the project and support provided to the project. According to the referred guidelines, the Ethics Advisor must be compensated for their work and it is an eligible cost.</p> |
| <p>Does Norway count as a non-EU country in terms of ethic issues? For instance, in terms of work with Scandinavian Indigenous communities?</p> | <p>Norway as a signatory country of the EEA EFTA agreement is considered to have a similar ethics framework guaranteeing high levels of protection to humans, animals, and environment. Even though Norway is usually flagged as non-EU country during the ethics appraisal process, the application of the trust-based approach with a focus on complex and serious ethics issues endorsed under Horizon Europe is applied similarly to research to be conducted in Norway.</p> |
| <p>What category does the PI who is the head of the laboratory belong to: A -Top Grade Researcher or B -Senior Researcher?</p> | <p>The personnel costs of the PI – whatever rank in the salary grid of the HI – are to be reported under “PI personnel costs” column in the budget table (not under “senior staff”).</p> |
| <p>Regarding CoG: how important is the popularisation of the grant - what activities can be funded?</p> | <p>You can of course ask for funding of dissemination activities and open access for publication of papers. It all depends on the character of the project. General public dissemination is not an evaluation criterion, though.</p> |

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| <p>If I choose a secondary panel, does it mean the number of panellists who read my proposal in the primary panel in step 1 will decrease?</p> | <p>Not necessarily. Usually, minimum 3 reviewers from the primary panel + reviewer(s) from the secondary panel.</p> |
| <p>Where can I find the XLS table for ERC Adv 2024 grant? In the call, only equipment XLS table is available.</p> | <p>The budget for AdG Lump sum is online. Only the equipment depreciation table is in Excel format.</p> |
| <p>Can you give us the link for the personnel cost dashboard?</p> | <p>Here it is: ERC personnel costs data for lump sum evaluations ERC (europa.eu)</p> |
| <p>I plan to conduct sampling in a developing country and will request extra funding. Can I also include a travel budget for collaborators who know the sites well?</p> | <p>Yes, travel costs to get to the field could be included in the additional funding category: "Other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs". Request for additional funding must be justified in the proposal.</p> |
| <p>Do the PI personal costs differ according to a country or host institution?</p> | <p>In principle, each institution has its own salary grid, in line with national/regional legislation. This is valid for each staff category.</p> |
| <p>How do you advise to integrate the 10% overhead by the Host Institution into the overall budget?</p> | <p>The budget should be established based on direct costs only. The system will automatically add a flat-rate of 25% based on the direct costs (except subcontracting and internal invoices). The HI cannot include its own overhead in the direct costs.</p> |
| <p>Could you give some tips/ advice on whether there is a maximum percentage of subcontracting that could be accepted? Not official but as an indication.</p> | <p>There is no guidance on acceptable level of subcontracting costs. What is important is that only limited part of the action is subcontracted (essential tasks of the project cannot be subcontracted).</p> |
| <p>Can I consult you (the ERC staff) on whether I should apply for an Advanced grant or a Synergy grant? I have a borderline case in terms of which one to apply.</p> | <p>Of course you can, unless you ask for a confidential information. If your research cannot be covered by one PI working alone, then you are more prone to SyG. Otherwise AdG is more appropriate and has a higher success rate.</p> |
| <p>Can you please give guidance on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) list of average cost ranges for Ethics Advisors/Advisory Boards b) Recommendations on suitable candidates etc. as ethics experts? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The average cost ranges for Ethics Advisors/Advisory boards are not defined as they will depend on the complexity of the project and the level of work commitment required from the Ethics Advisor/Ethics Board. b. The appointment of an Ethics Advisor/Advisory board should be based on their expertise in research ethics and in the ethical issues identified in the proposal (for example: in data protection, animals, ...). Furthermore, it is essential that Ethics Advisor/Advisory Boards maintain independence to prevent any potential conflicts of interest. The Agency cannot provide suggestions, the appointment of a |

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| | suitable advisor is under the responsibility of the PI and HI. |
| Can some budget elements be “conditional”? I will need a certain equipment for which the host institute is applying, but it’s not sure if they'll get funded. | In principle, the budget should be built taking into consideration the needs of the project. Items that might not be considered as necessary by the panel might be subject to a budget cut. |
| In the ethics issues table in part A, I'm asked to specify a page number of where this is explained. What document is this referring to? B1/B2/somewhere else? | This should refer to part B2. |
| If our country does not have a HPC computer cluster and I need to buy server computers to run calculations, can I put full price instead of depreciation price? | Only depreciation costs of the equipment are eligible and should be budgeted in the proposal for pieces of equipment that are necessary for the action implementation. |
| Does the PI salary is the same as the salary he/she would earn in his/her host institution if the person was employed on statutory funding not ERC grant? | The PI personnel costs cannot vary because it is funded by the ERC. However, there are some specific rules on project-based remuneration that may apply when the conditions are met. See the Annotated grant agreement on the Funding and Tender Portal for further information. |
| If the budget is miscalculated - does the project get funded with adjusted budget or rejected? | Clerical mistakes on budget calculation can be corrected (if selected for funding) upon funding and granting. |